

SYNTHTOPIA

ARP Founder Alan R. Pearlman Has Died

Alan R. Pearlman, engineer and founder of the pioneering synth manufacturer **ARP Instruments**, died yesterday at the age of 93.

His daughter, **Dina Pearlman**, [shared](#) the news:

My father passed away today after a long illness.

At 93, too weak to speak he still managed to play the piano this morning, later passing away peacefully in the afternoon. He was a great man and contributed much to the world of music you all know today.

Hopefully I can find something more eloquent to say, but I am too sad for words right now.

Pearlman (1925 – 2019) founded **ARP Instruments, Inc.** (originally Tonus, Inc.) in 1969, in the very early days of the synth industry. “ARP” was Pearlman’s nickname, as a kid growing up in New York City.

The company debuted what became the **ARP 2500** analog modular synthesizer the following year. It used a system of sliding matrix switches for patching, keeping the synthesizers’ knobs and switches unobstructed by patch cables. It was also known for offering oscillators that were more stable than other modular synthesizers of the time.

The company followed up with the introduction of the **ARP 2600**, in 1971. The ARP 2600 is a three-oscillator monophonic synthesizer. The default internal patching can be customized using patch cables.

In 1972, ARP introduced the **Odyssey**, designed to be a compact and performance-oriented synthesizer. The ARP Odyssey, a dual oscillator monophonic synth, was the company’s most popular synth. It remained in production for 9 years and through two major revisions.

ARP closed in 1981, and Pearlman went on to found a computer graphics company. But the company’s iconic synth designs are as popular as ever, with ARP-inspired synths available in both hardware and software forms.

Synthesist **David Baron** shared this short performance on an ARP 2500, in memory of Pearlman:



Alan R. Pearlman



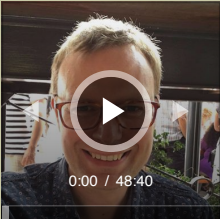
Jimmy Page with an ARP 2500

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Alan Robert Pearlman Goodbye on the Arp 2500



“Alan R Pearlman was an engineering genius,” [notes](#) Berklee College of Music Professor **Dr. Richard Boulanger**. “But I truly believe that the heart and soul in his machines drew their spirit and life from Alan’s musical virtuosity on the piano, his truly deep musical knowledge, his passion and enthusiasm for *all* music, and his nurturing and generous support for young composers and performers, regardless of whether they were into classical, avantgarde, film, fusion, rock or pop.”

The NAMM site has [an interview with Pearlman](#), from 2006, as part of their oral history program. In the interview, he discusses his early inspirations and the start of ARP. **Donald Tillman** has a summary of ARP-related patents [at his site](#).


Alan R. Pearlman, in around 2013

🕒 JANUARY 6, 2019 👤 SYNTHHEAD


📁 KEYBOARD SYNTHESIZERS, MODULAR SYNTHESIZERS

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5 thoughts on “ARP Founder Alan R. Pearlman Has Died”

Chris Stack

January 6, 2019 at 2:46 pm Reply

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Man is re-micing fun. All the guitars we recorded in Australia we took the dry, non-plug-in effected versions and rented a shitload of vintage amps from the 60’s and ran the dry signal into them and “mic-ed” them “again” (hence the name re-micing) and treated all the guitars and bass through all these classic amps. I am freaking the fuck out how dope they sound.

— BT

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"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." Isaac Newton

John L Rice

January 6, 2019 at 2:52 pm  Reply

Rest In Peace Mr. Pearlman, thank you for all of your inspiring musical instruments!

Nils Olav Kilen

January 6, 2019 at 3:30 pm  Reply

Back in the day, I learned a lot about synthesizers by reading 'Learning music with synthesizers' by Alan R. Pearlman. I still have it and browse through it from time to time. For inspiration. I have always admired the clear, logical layout and the clean sound of the ARP instruments. He will be surely missed, but his legacy lives on.

Atomic Shadow

January 6, 2019 at 3:44 pm  Reply

There is a KARP Odyssey due to arrive tomorrow. It's been a dream to own a 2600 since I was 18 years old. Since that is an impossible dream, I saw the chance to get a full sized Odyssey at a great price. It's very sad to wake up, check the tracking, then find that the man who designed these great instruments has passed away.

His creations will go on for decades to come. Hell, somebody will still be cloning them centuries from now.

alacazam

January 6, 2019 at 7:06 pm  Reply

Got a CAT synth for Christmas when I 16, along with it, I got the book "Learning Music With Synthesizers."
RIP Alan R. Pearlman.

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